

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement Kicks-Off** *First Phase Focuses On "Move It, Louisville!"*

LOUISVILLE (September 29, 2004) - Citing local studies that show Louisville ranks above national averages for lack of physical activity, obesity and poor nutrition, Mayor Abramson today announced a communitywide effort to focus on health and fitness issues and encourage participation in physical activity by individuals and groups alike.

According to Abramson, the **Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement** is a long-term effort designed to provide information, encouragement and highlight resources toward affecting real behavioral change throughout the community.

"We want to create a new culture in Louisville where physical activity and optimal nutrition are the norm and our citizens are routinely motivated to increase their level of physical activity and adopt healthier lifestyles," he said

Initially, the movement will target city employees, private sector employers and public/private partnerships, toward the goal of providing excellent examples and model programs for neighborhood organizations, schools, churches, work sites and individuals.

"It's time to *"Move it, Louisville,"* said Abramson in highlighting the first phase of the movement. "If everyone, young and old alike, would commit to just 30 minutes of physical activity a day for five days, we could turn this community around in terms of health care costs, absenteeism from work and school and very real quality of life."

Currently in Louisville, less than 65% of people engage in physical activity, 59% are overweight or obese and only 22% eat five or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day, the nationally recommended daily requirement. Abramson's goal is to affect as much as a 15% positive change in each of these indicators.

The **Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement** is being developed and administered through the Louisville Metro Health Department under the direction of Dr. Adewale Troutman. A 45-member Advisory Committee of the area's leading health and fitness professionals also has been named. The Health Department tracks the community's health progress through the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Study (BRFSS) performed every two years.

“The Mayor’s demonstrated commitment and support through his **Healthy Hometown Movement** is just the catalyst we need to develop a single, coordinated, focused effort highlighting the many opportunities for physical activity already in place in our community as well as identify opportunities for new efforts,” said Troutman.

One such new effort is the Louisville Metro’s own ***Take Charge Challenge***, a worksite wellness initiative, which started earlier this month among Metro government employees. The ***Take Charge Challenge*** is a voluntary ten-week program that encourages employees to increase their level of physical activity by setting goals and recording their activity each day. The goal is for the ***Take Charge Challenge*** to be replicated in subsequent months among private businesses and larger nonprofit organizations.

To encourage individual participation, Metro Parks officials introduced a new on-line directory of fitness-specific resources and activities available within the parks system. Parks Director Mike Heitz pointed out that with more than 13,000 acres of parkland and forest, Metro Parks is the largest fitness center in the community. The directory is available at [www.metro-parks.org](http://www.metro-parks.org) or by calling MetroCall at 311 or 574-5000.

Other new and emerging fitness programs were introduced as examples of the kinds of activities and initiatives groups, businesses and individuals may want to emulate:

- *Active Louisville* is a local extension of the nationally recognized Active Living By Design, a program that enhances and encourages environments that make it safe and convenient for people to be more physically active. The group is currently developing a pilot project for the new Clarksdale residential area including the Smoketown and Shelby Park neighborhoods.
- *Tap Into Fitness* is a community partnership among The Louisville Water Company, Jefferson County Public Schools, the Heuser Clinic, and the Jefferson County Medical Society to provide a year-long fitness and nutrition curriculum in elementary and middle schools. Schools participating in this year’s pilot program are Byck and Chenoweth Elementary and Meyzeek Middle School
- *Ford UAW* is overseeing a one-year pilot study to determine the success factors of an intensive work site wellness program which includes increased physical activity, improved eating habits and managing hypertension through the formation of teams and support from health care professionals who track results.
- *Fit For Me* is a collaboration of the University of Louisville, Cardinal Performance Team, Bellarmine University School of Nursing, Women 4 Women and Walnut Street Baptist Church designed to empower low-income teenage girls, ages 13-17, by providing

them with an after-school fitness program that promotes life-long learning and integrates fitness into life skills for everyday living.

The Mayor also has directed the Health Department to implement a *Healthy Hometown Mini-Grant Program* designed to fund neighborhood groups and small associations in amounts of \$500 to \$1,000 to develop neighborhood-based fitness programming and resources. Currently under development, the program will award up to \$80,000 in its first year and will be administered through the community's eight Neighborhood Places.

Finally, the Mayor announced that he will "walk the walk" for fitness by participating in the Coalition for a Healthy and Active America's (CHAA) Mayoral Challenge which will pit Abramson against Lexington Mayor Theresa Isaacs to see which mayor takes the most steps throughout the month of October. Each will wear a pedometer to track their steps. Ten thousand steps a day is considered the national norm for a healthy lifestyle. Along with bragging rights, the winning mayor will receive bronzed running shoes and more than a thousand pedometers for use in the community.

**For more information about the Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement go to [www.loukymetro.org](http://www.loukymetro.org) and click on "Healthy Hometown."**

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